OLD WYE
† CHURCH †
1721

A SHORT HISTORY

of

OLD WYE CHURCH

TWO-HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH

ANNIVERSARY

1721 - 1971

For more than two hundred and fifty years, OLD WYE has been a simple, rural church proclaiming by its very austerity the enduring quality of its people's faith in God. Today, it is still an active, though small, parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Easton, supporting a varied program of Christian activities as well as regular worship in its colonial house of God.

The present congregation numbers over one hundred interested persons of many faiths, seventy-five of them communicants of the Episcopal Church. Every year about two thousand persons visit the church and grounds, many of them making it a point to attend the eleven o'clock service on Sunday mornings.

Both parishioners and visitors realize that Old Wye has come to us as a hallowed trust, the fulfillment of the vision of a few generous and dedicated people and the place of worship for countless faithful souls throughout these many years.

In 1692, St. Paul's Parish, Hibernia in Mary Land was established for the colony as a part of the Anglican Church. The earliest records show that by 1694, St. Paul's had not only the "Mother Church" in Hibernia, but also was ringed about with three "chapels-at-ease", chapels to which the members could go with greater ease than attending the primary Church. Two of these chapels were called St. Luke's, one at Church Hill and the other at Wye. The third chapel was at Tuckahoe. One Vestry carried on the activities for the entire parish, a parish that extended some twenty miles in width and twenty-five miles in length!

In 1712, the Vestry of St. Paul's agreed to erect a formal chapel building at Wye, and matched the gift of the Rector for this purpose, some four hundred pounds of tobacco. Pews were auctioned off to the highest bidders, and gifts of the members for the construction were solicited. These gifts, one hundred pounds, sterling,

The location of the pulpit, prayer desk and lectern in the middle of the north aisle is typical of Southern Colonial church architecture. The canterlevered pulpit and sounding board are inlaid with walnut in a field of butternut and holly woods.

and sixty thousand pounds of tobacco, stimulated enough interest to begin construction in 1717. It was not easy sailing, for the Vestry had much trouble collecting the gifts and legacies which had been promised and had to apply to the Governor and Council for help in having these pledges paid.

On October 18, 1721, St. Luke's Day, Wye was officially opened for worship. Improvements, such as a plank floor, window shutters, and fences, continued to be made after the formal opening of the church.

Inasmuch as tobacco has had such an influence on the whole life of the Mary Land Colony, it seems fitting that we quote the following from the formal history of Old Wye as prepared by the Maryland Historical Society:

"By (the act of establishment) the county government paid to the vestry forty pounds of good merchantable tobacco for every taxable in the parish. A "taxable" was anyone over sixteen years old who was either a free-man or a male servant imported, or any slave, male or female. Clergymen and paupers were not taxable. In 1763 there were six hundred and twenty-nine taxables in St. Paul's, so the vestry had the disposal of twenty-five thousand one hundred and sixty pounds of tobacco. In that day, because the church was established and thus part of the government, vestries had many duties more governmental than churchly. Indeed, it is not too much to say that they were the local government for their parish. There was a law against adultery, a law with teeth in it. By its provisions, prosecutions for it began in the parish. A vestry must summon both the man and the woman who were charged with incontinent living, and admonish them thereof. Sometimes they appeared when ordered to do so, expressed regret, promised amendment and departed. Sometimes they did not come, or coming, invited the vestry to do its worst. Sometimes the same woman came

twice with different men. If the vestry was not able to cope with the people, then the county court took up the case. But the vestry had to initiate it, it was not just sticking its nose into the private lives of its parishioners.

If tobacco was the wealth of the parish, it was also the source of its work and worry. It was for the vestry to appoint the counters of tobacco plants, and inspectors of tobacco; and, more often than not, they had trouble finding men willing to act as inspectors. For all that tobacco was a medium of exchange in colonial Maryland, and almost the only one, it lacked one of the most important characteristics of a good currency; it was not, and could not be, invariably uniform. When it was enacted that any person owing tobacco could discharge his debt at the rate of twelve shillings per hundred pounds, the clergy protested. Tobacco was worth often twenty-five or even thirty shillings if it was good, but they were paid twelve shillings, and the planter could sell his tobacco for twice that much."

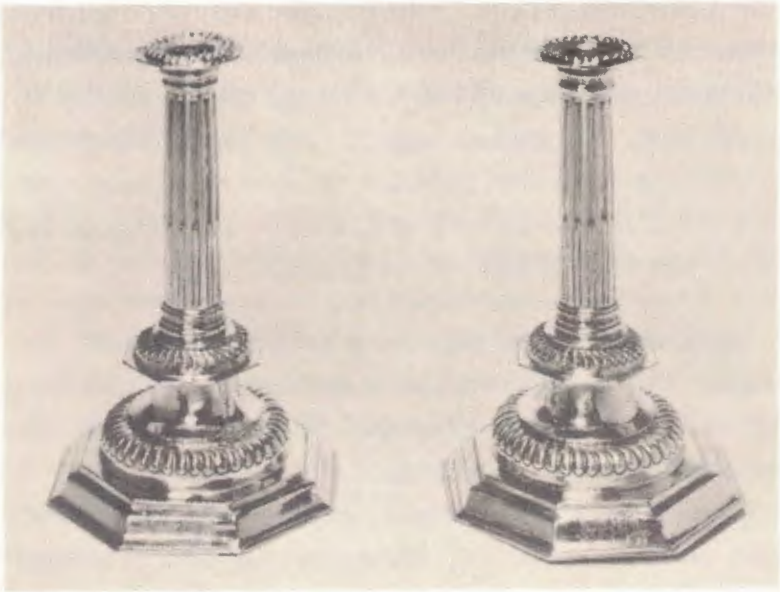
The Church seems to have led a peaceful existence until the year 1755 when the Rev. Alexander Malcolm, mathematician and clergyman became the master of the Queen Anne's Free School on Tilghman's Neck Road. He evidently allowed his son to substitute for him on occasions and it was discovered that the son, Mr. Quinton Malcolm "did teach dancing in the said school, without a license (!) which visitors apprehend must necessarily tend to the hindrance of teaching reading, writing, etc. . . . also that unless the number of scholars increase, this shall be looked upon as misspending the publick money."

The Vestry House was built in 1761-1763 at a cost of three hundred dollars. With the coming of the Revolution the entire position of the established Church changed swiftly. The Conti-

nental Convention which opened on June 12, 1774 took over the government of the colony and it became the government of the State of Maryland. The Bill of Rights by the Convention of 1776 provided that, "No persons ought by any law to be compelled to maintain any particular ministry or place of worship but the churches and all such property belonging to the Church of England ought to remain to the Church of England forever."

The first meeting of the first non-established Vestry was held in June 1779, the Vestrymen being qualified to act by a Justice of the Peace . . . all of which was some years before the "Protestant Episcopal Church" was chosen as the official name of this Church which really lost its name because of the Revolution. The Bill of Rights which took away the "forty pounds of tobacco per poll" did little more than leave the "Church of England" in possession of the property it held. It did, however, give the legislature discretionary power to "lay a general and equal tax for the support of the Christian religion, leaving to each individual the power of appointing his part of the tax to the support of some particular church or minister, or to the poor." Since the Vestry no longer had the power to appoint tobacco inspectors, or admonish parishioners of their incontinent living, it was obliged to spend more time on raising money for parish work. (A familiar modern note, indeed!)

After the Revolution, St. Paul's and Old Wye, together with all the other parishes, fell on evil days. Communicants as well as revenues almost vanished. Records, too, became scantier than ever before. Except as a place where notices were posted, Old Wye is not mentioned once between April 1774 and April 1789. From 1782 to 1791 there was no rector. In November 1791 a rector was appointed with a current salary per annum of one hundred fifty pounds current money — he agreed later to take whatever the Vestry could raise. Four years later the Reverend Elisha Rigg came to Old Wye,



The candle sticks were given to the parish at the time of the restoration in 1949 and bear the markers mark "D. B. London 1692."

William Hemsley, a very active communicant in 1737 presented Wye Church with a flagon and chalice for the Communion Service. They are still in constant use.

— his tomb lies under the floor of the church. In the early years of our Republic, the church required constant repairs and it was with great difficulty that the building was kept open.

For half a century nothing was done to Wye Church. After 1829 regular services were no longer held at Old Wye; it was almost fallen down, half decayed but for the solid workmanship of the bricklayers a century before. At about this time, Bishop Whittingham on his way to catch an early steamer out of Queenstown to Baltimore, happened by Old Wye, and saw that the church had become a stable. . . "The Episcopal party were greatly moved. They entered. They prayed. As they left they took fence rails and barred the door. The Bishop did not forget his visit, and he immediately began to encourage the Vestry to have the old building restored." By 1854, the Bishop's desires were being met. A new slate roof was put on, the outside stairs to the gallery were removed, and stained glass replaced the clear glass which had been broken out. Victorian pews replaced the original high-backed, square pews of 1721. The Vestry House, however, was not touched, because by this time it had completely deteriorated . . . and its precise location was unknown. Through the generosity of several parishioners, Old Wye was thus rescued from oblivion, and on July 20, 1854, the Bishop was pleased to be able to consecrate Old Wye under the name of "St. Luke's, Wye." The reconsecration seems to have stirred the congregation into activity, for within a few years, Wye was accepted as a separate parish (including Queenstown) by the Diocesan Convention of 1859.

A year after Wye Parish was set up as a separate parish, Fort Sumter was fired on. As Mr. Dashiell told the diocesan convention in 1864, "In the changed circumstances of the times nothing but the goodness of God has enabled us to live. . . The members of the parish though few and having suffered more heavily in the loss of

their labor have nevertheless shown a noble determination to sustain the Church and have endeared themselves to the Rector by a generous exhibition of their sympathy for him in his day of trial."

From 1867 to 1910 there was a succession of rectors at Old Wye. From 1910 on, there were only occasional services at Old Wye Church and the building fell again into disrepair. More than that, the changes made along the line had done great violence to the original building.

In the winter of 1947, Mr. Arthur A. Houghton, Jr. presented to the Vestry of Wye Parish a proposal to restore the old church. This very generous offer was accepted with enthusiasm and great appreciation. Even the Vestry House has been rebuilt on its old site. So long had it been gone that its very location was not known until a tractor plough cruising in the general area where it must have been, ran into a brick wall and subsequent search showed the outlines.

Old Wye Church was re-dedicated on July 13, 1949 at an impressive service conducted by the Bishop of Maryland and services have since been held in it every Sunday. In addition to the restoration work, a Parish House and Rectory were built.

And so Old Wye is a flourishing and strong parish. It bears eloquent testimony to the devoted Christian spirit and determination of its many members and friends over more than two centuries to maintain the Church as a going institution. Trials and tribulations have been many but today the building stands erect in all its beauty and simplicity.

This brief history can not be concluded without a final tribute to Mr. Houghton and the meticulous care and devotion with which he directed the restoration.

Originally built in 1761, the Vestry House was intended to provide a heated room for Vestry Meetings, usually of long duration in that period.

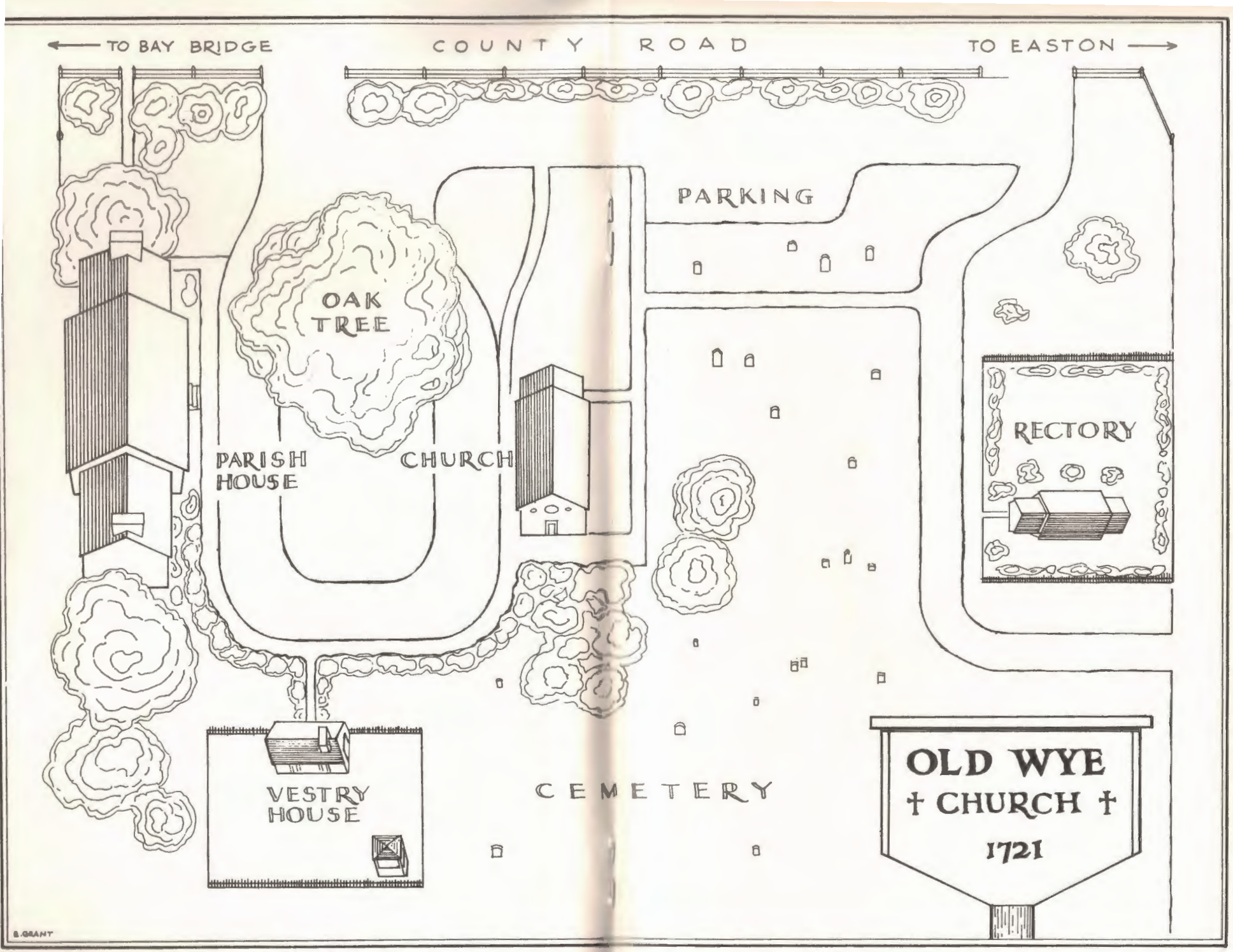
The furniture, maps and works of art are originals and reflect the furnishing of such rooms in colonial times.

This is a record of pews bouynt at auction in 1723 and a simple ac counting of church finances.

(£ refer to pounds of tobacco)

The altar is flanked by two clergy chairs, circa 1670. The chair seats were recently recovered with Florentine embroidery by members of the parish.

The kneeling cushions at the communion rail were designed by Mona Spoor and worked in petit point by Mesdames, Leon A. Andrus, Arthur A. Houghton, Jr., Donald F. Hyde, Arthur M. McCall and Frederick S.Wildman.


TO BAY BRIDGE
COUNTY ROAD
TO EASTON
PARKING
OAK TREE
PARISH HOUSE
CHURCH
RECTORY
VESTRY HOUSE
CEMETERY
OLD WYE
† CHURCH †
1721
B.GRANT

IN THE RESTORATION (completed 1949) of Old Wye Church and its attendant Vesty House, every effort has been made, where the original furnishings are no longer in existence, to use antique furnishings of the type that would have been used in the 18th Century. In certain instances, where appropriate antiques are not available, modern reproductions of the period have been used.

Church

CHANCEL

1. Altar Table. Jacobean type, of walnut with turned legs and plain stretches. (Modern)
2. Altar Cross. Carved wood, in gesso and gold leaf. Finials after Greek crosses. Carved and molded base. On walnut pedestal. (Modern)
3. Alms Basin. Brass, with chased border. Central medallion representing the Christ and St. Christopher. Spanish, c. 1670.
4. Altar Candlesticks. Silver, with fluted columns and hexagonal feet, engraved with the arms of Williams impaling Armstrong. Maker's mark: D. B. London 1692.
5. Altar Prayer Book. Printed by John Baskerville. Contemporary full red morocco binding, gilt edges. Cambridge 1762.
6. Altar Prayer Book Cushion. Of scarlet velvet with scarlet and gold rope edging. (Modern)
7. Altar Flower Vases. Brass, hexagonal in shape. (Modern)
8. Credence Tables. Pair of walnut credence tables. Square tops, fluted skirts, on single turned baluster pedestals, with square and molded bases. (Modern)
9. Collection Plates. Pewter.

   11 inch diam. Touch-marked IMB c. 1800
   " Touch-marked Thomas D. Bordman c. 1810
   8½ inch diam. Touch-marked with Tudor rose. c. 1800
   " Engraved on back CVD c. 1800

10. Communion Service

    Chalice—The original silver chalice of Old Wye Church. Engraved with the name of the donor, William Hemsley. c. 1737

    Flagon—The original silver flagon of Old Wye Church. Engraved with the name of the donor, William Hemsley. c. 1737

    Paten—Silver, with foot. Replica of an early 18th Century paten. (Modern)

    Cruets—Pair of armorial silver and cut crystal cruets. England, c. 1760

    Ciborium—Silver, elongated hexagonal. In the style of mid-18th Century. (Modern)

11. Rug. Antique oriental Capistan. Blue and red arabesques on green-grey background.

12. Communion Rail Kneelers. Scarlet damask with gold thread piping. (Modern)

13. Bishop's Chair. James II walnut armchair. Turned and carved, with cane back and upholstered scarlet velvet seat with fringe. c. 1670

14. Clergy's Chair. James II walnut arm chair. Turned and carved, with cane back and upholstered scarlet velvet seat with fringe. c. 1670

15. Wall Tablet. The Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer and Apostle's Creed. Wooden tablets, with gilt lettering on black background. Marbled wood frames. (Modern)

16. Processional Cross. Decorated brass with engraved inscription "In Memory of Bertha H. Higgins, 1874-1944". Presented by Wye Parish in memory of the wife of the former rector (1933-1944), Matthew S. Higgins.

17. Memorial Stone. White marble. Marking the grave of the Reverend Elisha Rigg, Rector 1796-1804, and commemorating an early unknown Colonial rector whose grave is under the altar.

NAVE

1. Baptismal Font. Hexagonal, of carved walnut. Baluster form with gadrooned basin. Flat molded cover surmounted by carved dove on hexagonal ball finial. (Modern)

2. Baptismal Bowl. Silver, with pedestal. (Modern)

3. Pew Cushions. Emerald green damask, with oak and rose 18th Century pattern in green buff, piped. (Modern)

4. Pew Kneelers. Similar to pew cushions.

5. Wall Lights. Reproduction of 18th Century brass sconce wall brackets, with square curved stems and finial holders. Glass hurricane shades. (Modern)

6. Pew Chairs (North Aisle). Oak turned side chairs. Seats and backs upholstered in brown leather, studded with brass nails. English style 1680. (Modern)

7. Pulpit. Panelled pine, painted. Carved walnut rail. Superstructure of walnut, consisting of pair of fluted corinthian pilasters with entablature fashioned to support hexagonal canopy and sounding board surmounted with flame finial. Soffit of sounding board inlaid with 6-pointed star of walnut, in a field of butternut and holly wood. Six subordinate stars of walnut around border. Backboard of pulpit, panelled pine. (Modern)

Walnut reading desk, with scarlet fringe and gold gimp. (Modern)
Pair of brass candlesticks of Queen Anne period. Circular stems with candle adjustors, on scalloped bases. c. 1710.

8. READING DESK.
CLERK'S DESK. Molded walnut. Bible cushions of scarlet velvet, trimmed with scarlet and gold silk rope piping and terminated by front corner bow knot tassels. (Modern)

9. BIBLE. The *magnum opus* of John Baskerville, England's greatest type-founder and printer. In a contemporary full red morocco binding, gilt edges. Cambridge 1763.

10. CLERGY'S CHAIR. Walnut arm chair, cabriole legs, duck feet front and back. Front knees carved and gilded. Upholstered in modern brown leather, bound with brass nails. c. 1710.

BALCONY FACE

1. ROYAL ARMS. The Royal Arms of England. Carved oak, with paint and gilding worn. Full bodied lion and unicorn supporting royal arms (late 18th Century quarterings) enclosed by motto *"Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense"* over rose and thistle with motto *"Dieu et Mon Droit"*. Visor and crown finial. c. 1770.

UNDER BALCONY

1. LANTERNS. Globe brass hand lanterns. (Modern)

2. REGISTER AND ALMS DESK. Walnut, on turned frame. (Modern)

3. WALL TABLETS. Commemorating the building of Old Wye Church in 1721, and its restoration in 1949. (Modern)

Vestry House

SOUTH WALL

ENAMEL PLAQUES. Set of twelve Limoges enamel plaques by Nardon Penicaud depicting the scenes of the Passion, after engravings by Martin Schongauer. c. 1510.

1 ANDIRONS. Wrought iron, with brass ball finials. English, c. 1740.

2 FIRE TOOLS. Wrought iron shovel, tongs and fork. c. 1720.

3 CLAY PIPES. Eight 18th Century churchwarden's clay pipes, molded bowls. English Royal Arms on bowls. (Modern)

4 ENGRAVING. Sir Thomas More, by Joannes Valdor. 1627.

5 LIBRARY. An 18th Century ecclesiastical library consisting of 250 volumes of religious tracts, sermons, histories, works of the divines, and translations of the classics. In original and contemporary morocco, sheep and calf, gilt tooled. Printed in the 16th, 17th and 18th Century.

6 STOOL. Jacobean oak form stool, with splayed legs. c. 1680.

7 WALL LIGHTS. Brass single bracket candle scones. Reproductions of 17th Century Flemish originals. (Modern)

WEST WALL

1. PROCLAMATION. Royal Proclamation; ecclesiastical, by King Charles II. Printed by John Bill and Christopher Barker. London, 1673/4.

2. MAP. Colored map of Britain, with representations illustrative of fourteen English counties. By John Speede, London, 1631.

3. TABLE. English oak side table, with drawer. Turned sausage type legs and stretchers. c. 1620.

4. CANDLESTICKS. Pair of brass candlesticks, on four legs. Flemish, c. 1740.

5. MAP. Colored map of Virginia and Maryland. By F. Lamb, sculp., sold by Thomas Basset and Richard Chiswell in St. Paul's Churchyard, London. 17th Century.

6. ENGRAVING. Mezzotint engraving of Thomas Knipe, S.T.P. (died 1711). Engraved by J. Smith from a painting by M. Dahl. 1712.

7. WALL LIGHTS. Same as South Wall.

CENTER OF ROOM

1. Vestry Table. Pennsylvania type walnut oval gateleg table, with drawer. Turned legs and stretchers, symmetrically arranged. American, c. 1720.

2. Candlesticks. Pair of bell foot, square based, brass candlesticks on four legs, with serrated floral pans. Flemish, c. 1700.

3. Candlesticks. Pair of bell foot, square based, brass candlesticks on four legs, with scalloped and pierced pans. Flemish, c. 1700.

4. Tobacco Jar. Chased steel with four brass ball legs and brass finial on cover. Modified octagon in form. Engraved "B.G" over a bottle and crossed pipes. Cover and all sides engraved with flowers, birds, sun's rays, etc. Dutch, c. 1770.

5. Writing Stand. Pewter standish on ball legs, with ink, shot and sand container. Pierced for quills, with two quill trays. c. 1710.

6. Side Chairs. Set of six walnut splat-back Pennsylvania-Maryland side chairs. Queen Anne type, cabriole legs and duck feet, with uncarved but scrolled knees. Splats simulating wide inverted balusters. Crowns scrolled. Turned stretchers between rear legs. Slip seats in modern brown leather. c. 1740.

7. Side Chairs. Set of five walnut side chairs. Flemish. Front legs and two stretchers turned in Dutch manner, with straight-sided balusters. Leather seats and backs (one antique and chased, four modern and plain) studded with brass nails. c. 1680.

NOTES ON THE ARCHITECTURE OF OLD WYE CHURCH AND VESTRY HOUSE

Old Wye Church stood alone on the site in 1947, when the work of preservation was undertaken. It was picturesquely overgrown by ivy, shaded by the wide spreading branches of ancient oaks. The original Eighteenth Century walls were preserved in large part, a factor which conveyed an impression of solidity and age more significant than that conveyed by the slate roof and overhanging eaves, the three chimneys and the wood details of the Nineteenth Century.

Evidences of the Vestry House had been obliterated from above the surface of the ground.

The Church had been built with an evident belief that the action of frost on foundations might be ignored. The brick walls were built on the sandy clay, the lower course being laid at an average of twelve inches below grade. The footings or lower courses had suffered and while bricks had weathered well, the mortar had disintegrated and had been seriously scoured by the ivy roots, with consequent dislodgement of the bricks and undermining of the walls. This condition was especially pronounced at the location of the buttresses. The superstructure was in good condition, except in three corners where settlement had opened minor cracks in the fabric.

At an earlier date, probably 1854, the west gable above the gallery level had been removed and rebuilt but largely with the original brick. No attempt had been then made to adhere to the pattern of the west end which, in Flemish bond with glazed headers constituted the one decorative feature of the exterior. Moreover, a repair had been made at the " east end " around the window " oval at the head," where without doubt the filler in the arch had originally rested on the wood frame of the window.

Happily throughout the old and surviving brick work were, and still are, clear outlines and evidences of the handwork of the original bricklayers both in quality and composition of mortar and in manner of laying. The joints had been ruled in the conven-

tional contemporary manner and were clearly visible. In the arches, however, a naive crudity, in terms of Eighteenth Century usage, is apparent. The arch bricks relate only approximately to the spring line, and are laid as full bricks or occasionally chipped. No attempt was made to "gauge," that is, to grind the bricks to meet the radial condition. The use of glazed headers, however, in the west wall seems to indicate that, as the work went forward, their decorative value was appreciated and the workmen introduced them into the window arches as they proceeded. These glazed headers are interesting accidental products of the clay burning with hard wood. They are the so-called "bench bricks" nearest the fire and being consequently less numerous than the "run of the kiln" were, by necessity, used sparingly. Incidentally, the decorative quality of these headers seems to have led William Elbert to use them with a design in mind when he laid them carefully at the break in the brick work at the west door. He seems deliberately to have instructed his bricklayers to omit the ruling of the joints between these corner bricks and the door jambs, expecting possibly soon to cover the area, limited above by a shelving course, with the usual Doric door frame.

Serious damage to the alignment of the side walls had been suffered over the years. The original arched ceiling had precluded a roof truss of reasonable strength, and neglect of the roof had no doubt caused deterioration in the truss fastenings sufficient to put excessive lateral pressure at the top of the side walls. Later, in 1858, when it appears that the roof was reframed and the slate was added, the arched ceiling was not replaced and tie rods were introduced to stiffen the frame. The 4″ displacement at the top of the walls at its widest point was sufficient to lead to the conclusion in 1949 that no repair of the walls could be undertaken without demolition. Moreover, in order to restore the arched ceiling and the original interior appearance, the structural use of visible tie rods was precluded, and it was evident that the weight of the new roof should be elsewhere distributed.

The Eighteenth Century wood trim had disappeared, cornice, door, window frames, sash, and their shutters. A small sacristy had been added, in a manner best suited to needs, adjacent to the chancel, and also well designed to preserve the integrity of the original design. This sacristy has been preserved and refitted, its brick work frankly of a character later than that of the Church.

Inside, the character of the Eighteenth Century was not apparent. Dark colors of pews and fittings and especially of the roof framing conformed with the usages of the time of the extensive repair. The wall sheathing of matched boarding extended above the backs of the low pews and up to the window stools. The chancel was raised one step and the sanctuary two steps above the brick floor of the nave. The chancel arch, however, and the original window openings in the side walls stood guard over the recollection of the past and the lower roof of the chancel contrasted with that of the nave in much the same agreeable manner as originally. The brick paving of the nave was reminiscent of that ordered and laid in 1730 but the bricks were of a modern type. Excellent in quality, they were of great subsequent value in the necessary rebuilding of the chancel arch. This arch had been seriously weakened. In this fact and the required rebuilding of the west gable wall lay the solution of the reconstruction of a new roof which would largely ignore the support of the side walls. Moreover, the chancel wall, as was hoped, contained a goodly proportion of original glazed headers, sufficient in quantity to provide for the full pattern of the new west gable. The tombstone of the Reverend Elisha Rigg had not been replaced over his grave in front of the chancel but stood in good condition within the rail of the sanctuary against the wall at the east end. A small basement had been excavated at the west end, south side, most inaccessible, and of five foot head room. This excavation had, however, required some brick underpinning of the walls. It is this basement which has been enlarged in 1949, to receive the heating and ventilating ducts and climate changer unit.

For guidance in reconstruction, the surviving evidences in the fabric were of fundamental value. They were numerous. Beside those that were readily visible, there were brought to light, when sheathing, plaster and floor and roof were carefully removed, the exact shape of the gables and slope of the roofs; the elliptical outline of the original ceiling in the nave and the segmental outline of that in the chancel; nailers for dado panelling, interior cornices, chancel rail and altar platform; putlock holes for the erection of the pulpit and pulpit canopy, and full evidence of the construction of the gallery. Original adzed pine rafters lay on the chancel arch wall, with their evidences of the original framing of the roof and particularly cut on their lower sides to allow

for and to follow the line of the elliptical ceiling. A similar vestige of the original framing of the east end of the chancel remained and remains in place. It traces in a similar manner the line of the segmental chancel ceiling. Holes in the walls disclosed the level of the wood floor of the pews. This dimension coincides with the written record which called for a wood floor 3'—9" below the windows.

Offsets in the west wall at the doorway indicated the presence of a reveal for the "folding doors." A curious splay at the window in the north wall nearest the pulpit represents an attempt no doubt to increase the light at this point. Incidentally, it is interesting to note the specified width of three feet for the nave windows. This is an early church on the Eastern Shore. Window widths in subsequent ones, such as St. Luke's, Church Hill, are wider.

The written records have been of conclusive value, both in guidance and corroboration. Instances of inconsistency, however, occur. The "Articles of Agreement" of 1717 call for "three windows on each side of the said church." The existing four windows, obviously original, indicate that the builders were perhaps fearful of an inadequacy of light. The "two oval windows to be at the west end above the square" had disappeared. Assuming that these windows had been constructed, design of the west gable, above the square, would provide light too far distributed to serve the gallery. A third "oval" gable window has been added in 1949 in conformity with this conception.

Preservation, Reconstruction and Restoration

The artisan of 1949 is guided by consideration of his duty to preserve all evidences of surviving work; to use these evidences to extend similar work; to take precautions in the modern manner to assure sound construction and to retard obsolescence; to equip the building with heat and light, plumbing and other mechanical requirements. He is guided also by the progressive changes in church ritual. He must provide for a modern choir and organ. Moreover, social changes have made obsolete the need for an outside stair to galleries. The evidences of the door to the gallery in the west end remain in the outside brick work. Notice that this door existed on the outside was recorded in 1847. This outside door and stair have not been replaced.

In *Preservation*, the walls remain and are repaired; they have been underpinned with concrete, the corners have been tied with metal to prevent further fissures. The chancel arch and wall have been rebuilt.

In *Reconstruction*, the roof has been replaced. A steel truss extends from east to west end of the nave and steel rafters are welded thereto, thus achieving a rigid roof system depending chiefly on end walls for support. The original levels have been respected in the framing of the floors. The sacristy has been repaired, enlarged and equipped. To provide for modern equipment, a tunnel has been constructed under the center pews to receive the ducts. The air is led to the aisles under the raised floors of the pews. The boiler has been installed in a full basement under the Vestry House, for the purpose of utilizing a chimney known to have existed. Conduits buried in the ground conduct heat, power, light and water to the Church. Modern lighting requirements have been met by installation of cold cathode tubular lighting in a recess above the cornices of the nave, and flood lights at the chancel arch.

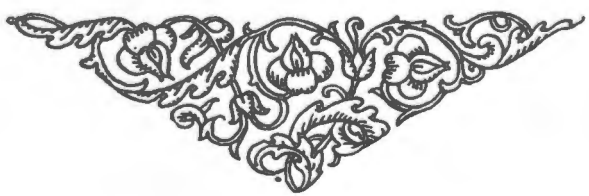
In *Restoration*, the disposition of the pews as shown in the plan of 1723 has guided their size, orientation and identity. The Reading Desk, required in the agreement, was supplemented by a Clerk's desk as observed by the Reverend Ethan Allen. The height and extent of the chancel sanctuary floor, the panelling and rail coincide with the wall nailers and with contemporary description. The balusters are " turned " as required and enclose the " Altar Table." The pews conform in height with wall evidences; those on the north wall narrower than those on the south. Cornices are applied at nailer heights; windows are " slyding " and are hung with the lead weights of the Eighteenth Century. The glass of early make was salvaged from the existing sash and reused. The ceiling follows the trace of the ancient line. The new floor is laid in hand-made bricks of the original type and the tombstone of the Reverend Elisha Rigg has been replaced over his existing grave. The chancel contains antique pieces actually contemporary with the original church. They are one arm chair and one side chair of the time of James II of quality consistent with their purpose as Bishop's and clergy chairs. The Altar Table, and Credence Table conform with known precedent and are newly made of American walnut. The Commandment Tablet and that

for Lord's Prayer and Apostle's Creed conform also with precedent, local and usual. Brass brackets with glass shades, for candles only, provide auxiliary and appropriate light. Fabrics, altar cloths, frontals, missal markers, cushions and the like are of Eighteenth Century weave and design and particularly conform with the quality then obtainable and required. The Bible at the Reading Desk is by Baskerville and contemporary with the Church. Pews have been numbered in accordance with the plan of 1723.

The roof has been laid with heavy butt red cedar shingles and the cornices of early Eighteenth Century profile are terminated with the tapering verge boards of the time.

The reconstructed Vestry House of 1763 is on its original site, of frame as ordered and of its original size and height. The interpretation of the record must conform with evidence as found. Hence, while the Vestry House is of the same area as ordered, it varies in its dimensions in order to fit the foundation as uncovered. The exposed face of the lower portion of the chimney is typical of the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The dado panelling and that at the fireplace end are not unusual in such small buildings. They are particularly designed as appropriate to the station of the Vestryman of the Eighteenth Century, a station described elsewhere in this booklet. The furniture is antique; old enough indeed to be not new in 1763; but, as was possible, a bit out of date and so possibly given or loaned by the Vestrymen from their houses for the purpose. The maps and engravings on the Vestry House walls are chosen to represent not only the local scene geographically, but also an historical interest in Church and State by the parishioners of the Eighteenth Century.

WILLIAM GRAVES PERRY



Addendum

Since the publication of this booklet in 1971, many changes have been made to Old Wye Church and the surrounding church yard. In addition, ongoing research has amplified and corrected some text in the booklet. This addendum is provided to bring readers up to date.

page 3, 2nd paragraph. Sunday service is currently held at 10:00 am.

page 3, 4th paragraph. Although the current church opened in 1721, it was preceded by a small wooden chapel located near the current site, believed to have been built between 1640 and 1650. The phrase "chapels-at-ease" should be "chapels of ease".

page 4, caption. The pulpit is more accurately described as a pedestal pulpit with a cantilevered canopy, or sounding board.

page 11, caption. The furniture, maps and works of art are not original to the Vestry House, but are period antiques reflecting the furnishings of such rooms in colonial times.

page 14, map. The great oak tree which once stood between the church and Parish House is gone. Like the famous Wye Oak (Maryland's state tree) which stood nearby, it was the victim of its great age, thought to equal or exceed that of the church. Today a brick walkway passes from the church through the cemetery to a columbarium built in 1982 and enlarged to its present size in 1990. During the first ten years of the twenty-first century two bricked and landscaped terraces have been added to the cemetery, one in the corner of the property behind the Vestry House and one on the south side of the church. A footbridge now leads from the old cemetery to a new addition, its entrance adorned by a large Celtic Cross carved of wood from the fallen Wye Oak. In keeping with the colonial architecture, a brick walled handicap accessible ramp has been added to the Parish House and a period utility building has been placed behind the rectory.

page 18, NAVE 3. PEW CUSHIONS. The pew cushions were renewed in 2001 and are now covered with a traditional celadon tapestry fabric.

page 19, BALCONY FACE 1. ROYAL ARMS and REAR COVER caption. The oak Royal Arms carving was acquired at the time of the restoration to represent the arms of the reigning monarch. A similar carving is known to have hung in the church in colonial times but it was subsequently lost.

page 19, BALCONY In 1990 the Vestry commissioned J. W. Walker & Sons, Ltd., of Brandon, Suffolk, England, to design and build an organ in harmony with the church. Dedicated in 1992, the instrument incorporates mechanical tracker action with seven stops, two duplexed manuals, and pedal. It is housed in a fretted cherry case which focuses and projects its sound while concealing the pipes.

page 20, SOUTH WALL ENAMEL PLAQUES. The 12 Limoges plaques are no longer owned by the parish.

The Royal Coat of Arms on the balcony face is that of George II and indicates that the church was supported by taxation.